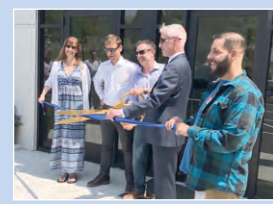


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Meet Teddy, Sushi & Bella

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SERVING PALMER, MONSON, BRIMFIELD, HOLLAND & WALES

The Journal Register



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TOWN

Monson dog ordered to remain restrained outdoors

By Rebecca Wehner
Staff Writer
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MONSON— Following an ongoing series of concerns regarding a dog deemed dangerous by the Select Board, an order was given to keep the dog restrained and muzzled outside of its property.

The debate regarding the dog, Asha of Cedar Swamp Road, finally closed on the May 9 Select Board meeting after Chair Patricia Oney stated that the owners had complied with the orders given to them.

“Substantial compliance has been met,” Oney said. “After this long process, I am satisfied with the measures that have been taken by the dog’s owners per our order.”

This article was first discussed on Nov. 29, 2022, when a written complaint was given to the Select Board regarding Asha’s dangerous disposition. The resident who submitted the statement, Dimitri Krutov, said that the dog had attacked him and his son years earlier, and had recently chased his young daughter in the neighborhood.

Asha is owned by Melissa and Bill Kierkla, with Krutov abutting their property on one side and Shirley Lamb on the other side. Lamb testified that Asha had attacked her husband in 2018, and has continued to disturb the neighbors by barking for long periods of time daily and raising concerns of safety.

At a hearing on Jan. 10, the dog was eventually deemed “dangerous”. An order was given to Asha’s owners to keep the dog humanely restrained when outdoors with a runner that is no closer than 50 feet away from the abutting properties.

When outside of the owners’ property, Asha was ordered to be muzzled and restrained on a leash no longer than three feet to assure safety to neighbors and community members.

During last week’s meeting, the selectboard spoke with Melissa Kierkla to verify that her dog was in compliance with all orders, and Kierkla verified that all necessary equipment was purchased and is now in use.

“The order states that the dog only needs to be muzzled if it leaves the property,” Kierkla said. “So the runner is up, but she never leaves the property so we didn’t get the muzzle.”

Lamb said through her observations at the abutting property that the Kierklas did not comply with the regulations given until a later hearing, when the Select Board and Police Department deliberated on taking Asha away. Lamb said she would want to see consequences given to the Kierklas for not complying at the right time.

“I realize that there was some issue with the timeliness of the compliance, but at this point given that they are in compliance I have no interest in taking their dog or dragging this on,” Oney said.

Kierkla’s compliance was accepted and no additional consequences were given.

Select Board meetings can be watched at m-pact.tv.



Teachers and paraprofessionals enjoyed treats from the food truck hired by Palmer Public Schools PTO a few of the members on hand were (from left) Ashley Cowher, Stacy Ashford, Amy Zajac, Michele Holbrook, and Alissa Chapin.

Turley Publications photo by Marcelo Gusmao

TEACHER APPRECIATION Week



Submitted photo

Old Mill Pond students are all smiles with the snack cart for the teachers and paraprofessionals (from left) Jaclyn Swiatlowski, Olivia Drewnowski, Aria Nompoggi, Rylie Holbrook, with Nathan Drewnowski in the back.

COMMUNITY

Food policy council wants to hear all voices in future decision making

By Paula Ouimette
pouimette@turley.com

REGION — Members of the Quaboag Valley Food Policy Council discussed ways they could make sure that each voice is heard when it comes to decision making.

“This Council is extremely new,” Council Coordinator Caitlin Geaghan said, and members are still organizing and planning.

She said the hope is that once they have finished the planning process and determined the needs of the region, the Council can expand beyond the 12 towns it currently covers.

Geaghan said there are a few options available to the Council

when it comes to making decisions, including single person decides, group decides by consensus and group decides by voting.

Single person decides would allow for one member of the group to have decision-making responsibilities, either with or without input from the rest of the members.

With group decides by consensus, decisions would either be hard, where all would agree; or soft, where most would agree, but those that don’t wouldn’t be upset by the decision.

Group decides by voting would have members use either a ballot, hand or voice vote.

Members could decide on a minimum vote, a simple majority

or a two-thirds vote or plurality.

Council members agreed that most decisions should be made by the group, possibly leaving minor, day-to-day decisions up to Geaghan and Project Coordinator for Community Health, Emily Coderre.

Linda Fuchs, an organic farmer from Brimfield, said having a single person decides method would negate people’s time spent being in a group.

“The advantage of this group is the diversity of organizations present,” she said.

Gail Gramarossa of the Quaboag Hills Substance Use Alliance suggested using consensus

FOOD POLICY | page 3

GOVERNMENT

Reparations long overdue for Quabbin Reservoir

Legislators pitch five bills to the state

By Christal Whelan
cwhelan@turley.com

The Joint Committee on Environment and Natural Resources convened at the Massachusetts State House last month to consider the testimonies in regard to 34 bills related to waterways, wetlands, water resources and oceans in Massachusetts.

Justice for the towns around the Quabbin Reservoir was high on the agenda with five bills, more than four legislators, and several citizens all testifying in support of some kind of compensation to the communities in western Massachusetts who have lost rather than gained by sharing one of their greatest natural resources – water – with the commonwealth. Collectively, the tone of the legislators was one of moral outrage for the annexation of land, the human cost of flooding a vast and populated plain to build the Quabbin Reservoir, and the continued one-way gain for eastern Massachusetts.

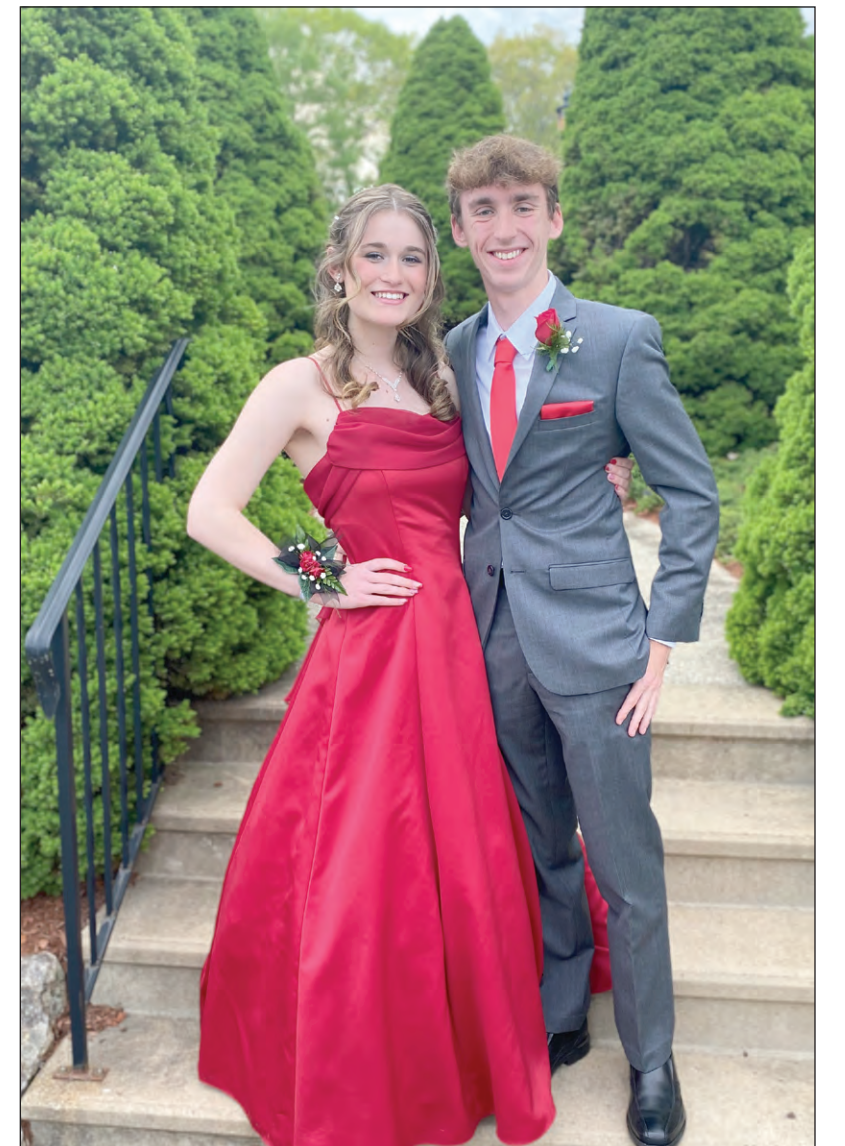
In a swift three-minute pitch, the time allotted to all the speakers, state Rep. Aaron Saunders addressed the uncomfortable issue of regional equity, and recommended a closer examination of how the Massachusetts Water Resources Authority has been operating for decades since the towns of Enfield, Prescott, Greenwich and Dana were first incorporated and then completely submerged to make this enormous, life-sustaining Quabbin Reservoir.

The bills aim to offer some kind of consideration to the communities that continue to steward the Quabbin watershed. At present, a section of the bill prohibits any

QUABBIN | page 5

SCHOOLS

Prom season at Pathfinder



Turley Publications Photos by Dallas Gagnon

Miranda Pratt and Nathan Bigda pose in red formalwear for the night’s event. More photos on page 8.



Pet of the Week



TEDDY, SUSHI AND BELLA

These are Jane Mirabile's beloved Teddy, Sushi, and Bella, who come from Monson but are now living in Georgia and Maine. We feature your pets here. Is your fur friend a dog, cat, chicken, lizard, horse, bird, mouse...you get the point. Is there a pet you're fostering and trying to re-home? All pets are welcome! Email a high-resolution jpg of your pet with a little information to mharrison@turley.com.

TEACHER APPRECIATION



On Sunday May 7, students Jillian Holbrook, Kierra Roche and Rylie Holbrook put up lawn signs, drew with chalk and hung posters decorating the outside of the schools to show their appreciation.



Submitted photos
Students Dylan Holbrook and Kennndl Roberts went around with the cart and are here with the cafeteria staff.



Students Anthony Braden, Jayden Riopel, Hannah Miner, Aria Nompleggi, Adelynn Allard, Emily Provost, Jaclyn Swiatowski, and Isabelle Braden decorated the sidewalk outside of Old Mill Pond School. During Teacher Appreciation Week, Teachers were given decorated cookies, a free raffle entry in the OMP PTO raffle, a breakfast buffet, a snack cart delivered goodies and a food truck was on setup at the end of the week.

Memorial Day celebrations in Monson

MONSON — The town, in conjunction with American Legion Post 241 and the Patriotic Celebrations Committee welcomes Monson families and friends of the community to honor and pay tribute to service members and veterans who have made the ultimate sacrifice or have otherwise passed on.

Those who want to pay tribute and people who served in the Armed Forces are encouraged to participate by placing flags at their eternal place of rest. Monson's Veterans Office asks people to meet at one of these cemeteries 9 to 11 a.m. on Saturday, May 27:

- Bethany Cemetery, located on Bethany Road
- Hillside Cemetery, located on the corner of Mill and Main Street
- Hillcrest Cemetery, located on Wilbraham Road
- Brimfield Road Cemetery on the corner of Aldrich and Brimfield Roads

Members of the American Legion Post 241 and Patriotic Celebrations Committee will be on-site at each location to provide flags, flag placement protocol instructions and assist as necessary.

This is a family friendly event that will take place rain or shine. Organizers ask that dogs always remain leashed and in control by their owner.

Graves marked with veteran markers and headstones will be provided with a flag. In the event your family member, relative, or friend does not have a military marker or headstone, the town asks that you notify a member of the on-site Patriotic Celebrations Committee. Flags will be provided for placement at the Veterans place of rest and will be added to the list of Veterans buried in the cemetery.

In the event of an oversight or missed gravesite. Flags will be available at the following locations:

- Town of Monson Cemetery Department, 32 Wilbraham Road
- Town of Monson Veterans Service Department, 110 Main Street, Suite 011
- American Legion Post 241, 143 Palmer Road
- Lombard Funeral Home, 3 Bridge Street

Family members, loved ones, and Friends are encouraged pick-up a flag, place the flag at the veteran's location of rest and notify the Town of Monson's Veterans Services Director, Troy Brin at tbrin@monson-ma.gov or 413.267.4140.

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Business

Silver Therapeutics opens town's first cannabis dispensary

By Michael Harrison
Correspondent

PALMER — Now, for the first time, local residents who are at least 21 years old can legally purchase cannabis without leaving town.

Silver Therapeutics, at 1235 Thorndike Street, is Palmer's first recreational dispensary and is open for business seven days a week as of 10 a.m. on Friday, May 19. A ribbon-cutting for the long-anticipated business was held last week as Silver Therapeutics officers and staff were officially welcomed by Town Manager Ryan McNutt and others.

Like many other business ventures, there were fits and starts to get plans to transform the long-closed Al's Bike Shop, practically engulfed by weeds not long ago, off the ground. This project was particularly fraught for a variety of reasons, according to the principal owner of the dispensary.

"This was a project we've been working on for a number of years," CEO Josh Silver said.

"We're actually the second group that came in and tried to take a swing at it. We picked it up, we built the (building) from the ground up and we had just every single headwind you could imagine — from COVID-19 to supply shortages on the construction side. It took us a while, but we're just really excited to be the first to open in Palmer. It's a really special facility we built here."

The pandemic was perhaps the biggest obstacle, Silver said.

"COVID was a year (setback)," he said. "Not just the physical limitations to be able to move around and take meetings, but also the financial markets tightened up, given the uncertainty where everything was. So that was fully a year and then there were six months of construction delays. You name it, it happened to us. It's all about perseverance."

With the exception of the pandemic, however, there wasn't much in the process Silver and his team hadn't been through before.

"We've done this in several communities," he said.

"This is now the seventh dispensary we've opened and the town of Palmer was really a pleasure to work with. They didn't get hung up on a lot of questions. The questions they had were pragmatic things about running a dispensary — will there be enough parking, is the circulation going to be OK, what's the drainage situation going to be like? Just standard development issues. In that regard they treated us like any other commercial developer, which is really what you want when you're coming into a new community."

Creating the physical space was "a family affair" Silver said, explaining that his wife, Chelsea Silver, handled the interior design and his brother-in-law, a carpenter, "built all of our cabinetry" as he did for the group's six prior shops.

Members of the small crowd invited to the ribbon cutting were enthused about the project finally coming to fruition.

"Any progress for Palmer is positive," said Jan McCoy, who represented the Quaboag Hills Chamber of Commerce.

"It adds to the tax base, it adds to our availability of employment opportunities. I'm eager to see the popularity of it. I wish them all the best and I'm glad they chose Palmer as one of their destinations. It's



Town Manager Ryan McNutt helps Silver Therapeutics Chief Cultivation officer Josh Ferranto with the ceremonial ribbon cutting for the new dispensary — Palmer's first. Also participating are Jan McCoy, representing the Quaboag Hills Chamber of Commerce (far left), Silver Therapeutics CEO Josh Silver (second from left) and Silver Therapeutics General Manager Anthony Ramos (far right).



In addition to flower and vapes, edibles and other cannabis products are available at Silver Therapeutics



Silver Therapeutics also sells cannabis and CBD-related books for those who want to learn more.

an excellent location right next to the turnpike and it couldn't be happier for them."

McCoy also made the point that it's another opportunity for residents to shop local. Previously, the nearest dispensaries were in Ware, Belchertown and Springfield. And, it won't be long before Silver Therapeutics has local competition. Kali Cannabis broke ground in March for a dispensary expected to open this summer at the intersection of Shearer and Thorndike streets and a third one is planning to open in a storefront in a diverse strip mall on Park Street.

At Silver Therapeutics, customers will find a full array of products — flower, vapes, edibles and more — from its long list of partners, including Green Thumb Industries, Fernway, MassGro and Insa. General Manager Anthony Ramos said he plans to arrange pop-up events from some of those brands. No dates have been set, but Ramos said news, special offers and events will be posted on the dispensary's Facebook page.



Brother and sister, co-owners of Seasons Pool and Patio, Daniel Lemelin and Cheryl Lemelin were on hand to greet customers at their grand opening on May 6th.

Grand Opening

On May 6, Seasons Pool & Patio had their grand opening. They welcomed more than 100 people who stopped in to see the new store and what they have to offer for pools and spas. Seasons Pool & Patio is located at 3339 Boston Rd., Wilbraham.



Inside the Seasons Pool and Patio store you can find a wide assortment of pool and spa chemicals as well as fun pool toys and floats.



In the spa showroom many customers looked at the new spas available, some with state of the art technology that help with stress relief, sleep, injury recovery and hydration of your skin.

Turley Publications photos by Deanna Sloat

Exciting programs at Old Sturbridge Village

STURBRIDGE- Old Sturbridge Village is full of exciting programs and activities in May. Come see the new re-curated exhibit, For the Purpose of Illumination, opening in the Countryside Gallery on May 19. Learn how New Englanders needed, used, and created artificial lighting methods in the 1830s and see first-hand artifacts from the era. The Early Lighting exhibit is a newly curated collection.

This summer's Blue Star Museum season begins on Saturday, May 20, Armed Forces Day, and runs through to Labor Day. To gain free admission, military family members will show their military or dependent identification card.

The weekend of May 20-21 will see the long-awaited opening of the newest restaurant, the Ox & Yoke Café. Come try the new offerings available from salads, soups, and sandwiches to cookies, baked goods, and pies. Diners do not need to pay admission to enjoy



Old Sturbridge Village Wool Days are being held on May 27-29

all the restaurant has to offer! Wool Days are May 27-29. Watch the sheep being sheared, feel the wool, and watch and learn about the spinning and dyeing processes. OSV is open on Memorial Day, May 29.

Learn more about what's happening at the Village at www.osv.org/events-experiences/calendar/. Hours are 9:30 a.m.-5:00 p.m. Wednesday-Sundays. Ticket information is available at www.osv.org/plan-your-visit/

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Judi Bechard (right) helps Liane Gladkowski buy flowers at Five Star.



Jaime Pappas hangs up new flowers at the store.



Lorene Noble posed in front of the waterfall at Five Star's garden.



Abigail Shea hangs up planters as they arrive.

Local business offers quality, beauty to community

By Kimberly Palmucci
Correspondent

PALMER – For more than 25 years, the Five Star Gardens landscape design and construction company has been serving the community.

“We enjoy working with the landscape and gardening communities to help them create quality, beauty, and tranquility in their own ‘Five Star Gardens’ and plan on continuing to do it for years to come,” said John Rakouskas, one of the company’s owners.

Five Star Gardens, whose full-service garden center is located at 181 Ware Street in Palmer, specializes in the design and installation of landscape plantings and hardscapes, such as patios, walkways, and granite steps.

“We have trained horticulturalists on staff to assist our customers with all their gardening endeavors,” Rakouskas said. “Our goal as we look down the road is that we will have the opportunity to transition Five Star Gardens to the next generation of gardeners so that our local communities will continue to enjoy excellent gardening and landscape products and services.”

It all began in 1989 when Five Star Landscapes Inc. formed in Wilbraham, according to Rakouskas.

“We purchased the Palmer location in 1994 and ran the landscape business there, eventually opening our garden center, Five Star Gardens, in 1996,” he said.

Rakouskas and Leonard Peltier, an owner of Five Star Gardens, worked together during their college years at Tarnow Nursery in Chicopee.

“We both had a desire to start a business but we had young families at the time,” Rakouskas said. “We decided that our chances for success would be greatly increased by teaming up.”

With their spouses—Therese Rakouskas

and Lucy Peltier—they formed Five Star Landscapes Inc. in February of 1989.

“All our children at one time or another have worked at our garden center teaching them about the business,” Rakouskas said. “Lorene, Lenny’s sister, has been the roots of our garden center for the past 20 plus years since she joined our team. Our customers look forward to seeing her at the start of every season and know that they can always count on her and our garden center staff, whom she trains, to give our customers superior service.”

Rakouskas said the organization has many dedicated employees that return every season, such as Will St. Marie who has been with the business for over twenty years.

“We appreciate all of their hard work over the years,” Rakouskas added.

The business frequently works on residential landscapes in the communities of Palmer, Belchertown, Wilbraham, Monson, Ware, and Ludlow.

“The type of job that we are well-equipped for are landscape

renovation projects where there is an established landscape that needs to be removed and replaced with new plantings,” Rakouskas said.

“We also have assisted clients with new home landscape projects and work with them from the ground up to create their Five Star Landscapes,” he said. “If our customers would like to install their own landscapes, the garden center offers advice on plant selections and proper plantings and placement.”

Rakouskas said that Palmer has always been a “loyal and supportive community.”

“We have a close relationship with our neighbors who greet us with a wave as they see our line of landscape vehicles heading out in the morning to our next landscape project,” he said. “We feel truly blessed to have been a part of our local communities over these many years and appreciate the love and support they have shown and continue to show us season after season.”

For more information, visit www.fivestargardens.com.

Monson Savings Bank announced election of new Corporators

MONSON – Monson Savings Bank recently announced the election of six new Corporators at its recent Annual Meeting.

They are: Patricia Bernard, Tricia Canavan, Randy Demarest, Jonathan Little, John Perez and Abby Sullivan had been elected by existing Corporators.

Additionally, Corporator Julie Quink, was named as a Trustee.

“The Monson Savings Bank family welcomes our new Corporators with open arms,” Monson Savings Bank President and CEO Dan Moriarty said.

“These well-regarded, local professionals will undoubtedly add value to the Bank. Like our current Corporators, their values align with Monson Savings’ values. They are invested in the wellbeing of our local communities because, like us, they are a part of these communities. We are assured that they will offer guidance to us as Corporators of the Bank, and they will support the Bank in better serving our communities.”

Bernard resides in Springfield and is deeply involved with the Springfield community. Bernard is the Vice President of Finance and Operations at Martin Luther King, Jr. Family Services. She is the Board Treasurer at the African American Female Professor Association, a Volunteer Tax Preparer for the IRS Volunteer Income Tax Assistance Program, and a Former Board Member of the Springfield Sickle Cell Association.

In her spare time, Bernard enjoys singing with a Gospel ensemble.

Canavan is a resident of South Hadley and is the CEO of the Tech Foundry, which is located in Springfield. Canavan’s ties to the community include being the Board Chair of the Western Massachusetts Economic Development Council and a Board Member of the Associated Industries of Massachusetts. Additionally, Canavan is involved with the Massachusetts Business Alliance for Education, Springfield Public Forum, and Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education.

Demarest is a resident of East Longmeadow and is a sales executive at Conklin Office Furni-



Submitted Photo

Shown here (from left) are: Monson Savings Bank Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer, Michael Rouette; Monson Savings Bank’s newly elected Corporators: John Perez, Patricia Bernard, Jonathan Little, Randy Demarest, Abby Sullivan and Tricia Canavan; along with Monson Savings Bank President and CEO, Dan Moriarty.

ture located in Holyoke. Demarest enjoys being involved in the local communities. Some of his community affiliations include the Office Furniture Recyclers, the East of the River Chamber of Commerce, the Greater Holyoke Chamber, and the Pioneer Valley Business Executives. In the past, Demarest coached youth basketball, soccer, softball, and swim teams.

Little resides in Florence and is a real estate broker at Jennings Real Estate Service Inc. He previously was employed by the Bronson Companies, where he served as Director of Development. Little is a Licensed Massachusetts Auctioneer and enjoys spending time in the community in his role as Northampton Chamber of Commerce Ambassador.

Perez is a resident of Springfield and is principal of Consilium Opus, LLC. Perez has a long-standing history of community involvement. He has had past and current involvement with the Rotary Club of Springfield, the Springfield Regional Chamber of Commerce, the World Affairs Council of Western Massachusetts, the Raising of the Dominican Flag Annual Event at Springfield City Hall, and the Dominican Cultural and Sports Center.

Sullivan resides in Hampden and is the Vice President of Operations at Affordable Waste Solutions

Inc. She was an integral member in the creation of Affordable Waste Solutions, which was incorporated in 2012. When she is not in her office, Sullivan enjoys spending time in the local communities.

Quink is a resident of Hardwick, MA. She currently is the Managing Principal at Burkhart, Pizzanelli PC. Quink has an extensive history of serving the local communities.

She serves as a member of the Board of the Mass CPAs, Treasurer of the Quabbin Hills Chamber of Commerce, a member of the Board and Finance Committee Member of Baystate Wing Hospital, Assistant Treasurer of Directors of Square One, Board Chair of the School Committee of Pathfinder Regional Vocational Technical High School, a member of the Finance Committee of the East Quabbin Land Trust, Board Chair for Greater Springfield Senior Services, Inc., Treasurer of Hardwick Rescue & Emergency Squad, Inc., Treasurer of Estate Planning Council of Hampden County, and Board Member of I Found Light Against All Odds.

Additionally, she is an adjunct faculty in the MBA Accounting program at Elms College.

To learn more about Monson Savings Bank visit monsonsavingsbank.com.

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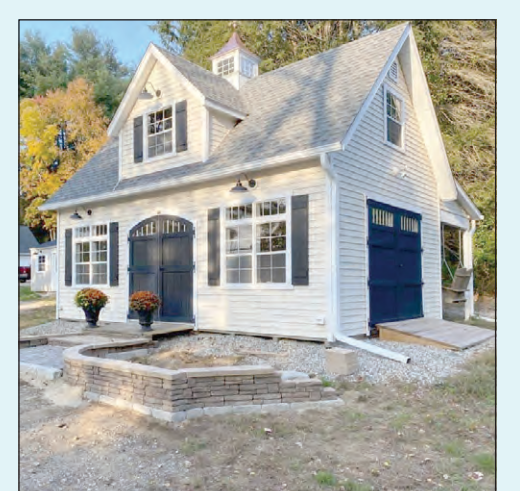
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Dancing the night away



Morgan Austin and Jake Luukko are shown smiling and in color coordinated attire.



Rachelle Brown is shown wearing a yellow gown with a train alongside date Cody Jameson, who is wearing a gray tux with yellow accents.



Shown is friend group Lauren Chaples, Jacquelyn Aldrich, Anthony Peck and Nathan Patrick.



Elissa Puffer-Cochran and friend Emma Caron smile as they sit together at prom.

Pathfinder seniors enjoy star-studded prom



A student is shown wearing a floor length, navy blue, sequined gown while smiling inside the gazebo.



Jemalex Moskowitz and friend Giana pose for photos before prom.



Hunter Skowryra and Catalina Mudgett wear matching teal attire for the event.



Students Tyshawn Aponte and Sky Frazier are shown under an archway in matching formal attire.



Victoria Stephens and Stephanie Kozlik are shown posing under the gazebo archway.



Friends Sean Moon, Alec Thompson and Cody Ostiguy are shown gathered together before prom.

Turley Publications Photos by Dallas Gagnon

Students at Pathfinder Regional Vocational Technical High School celebrated their senior prom in true Hollywood fashion at Zukas Hilltop Barn in Spencer, Friday, May 12.

While the event's theme was "Starry Night," many students brought sparkle with them - some wearing floor length sequined gowns with others opted for classic silk attire.

The event was hosted outside under an elegant banquet tent, draped with string lights to give the evening the "starry night" effect.

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BASEBALL

Panthers suffer sweep from Ware

By Tim Peterson
Sports Correspondent

WARE—Whenever the varsity teams from Palmer and Ware High Schools face each other between September and June, it's always a very intense battle. The rivalry does take a little bit of a break during the summertime.

A couple of the players on the Palmer and Ware varsity baseball teams will be teammates on the Monson Post 241 Legion baseball team this summer. The Post 241 squad will be playing their home games at Legion Field in Palmer

year's team," said Palmer senior catcher Dom Allen. "Ware is one of our biggest rivals during the school year, but we're teammates during the legion season. You quickly form bonds with the players from the other high schools. It's going to be a lot of fun."

The Monson Legion team, which is managed by Steve Tripp, will also have players from Pathfinder Tech and Monson High School.

"The Legion baseball coaches have always treated my players great," said longtime Ware varsity baseball coach Scott Slattery. "The



Theo Haley fields a grounder on his left.

after not fielding a team a year ago. "We didn't have a legion team last year and I'm very excited about being a member of this

Palmer and Ware players will become good friends during the legion season, which is a great thing. I'm very glad that the legion team is



Sebastian Mayberry makes a toss to first.

Photos by David Henry www.sweetdogphotos.com

back this year."

Allen will be one of the oldest players on the legion baseball team, along with his classmate, Ty Miller, who's a member of the Panthers pitching staff. Palmer freshman Brendan Hess will also be a pitcher

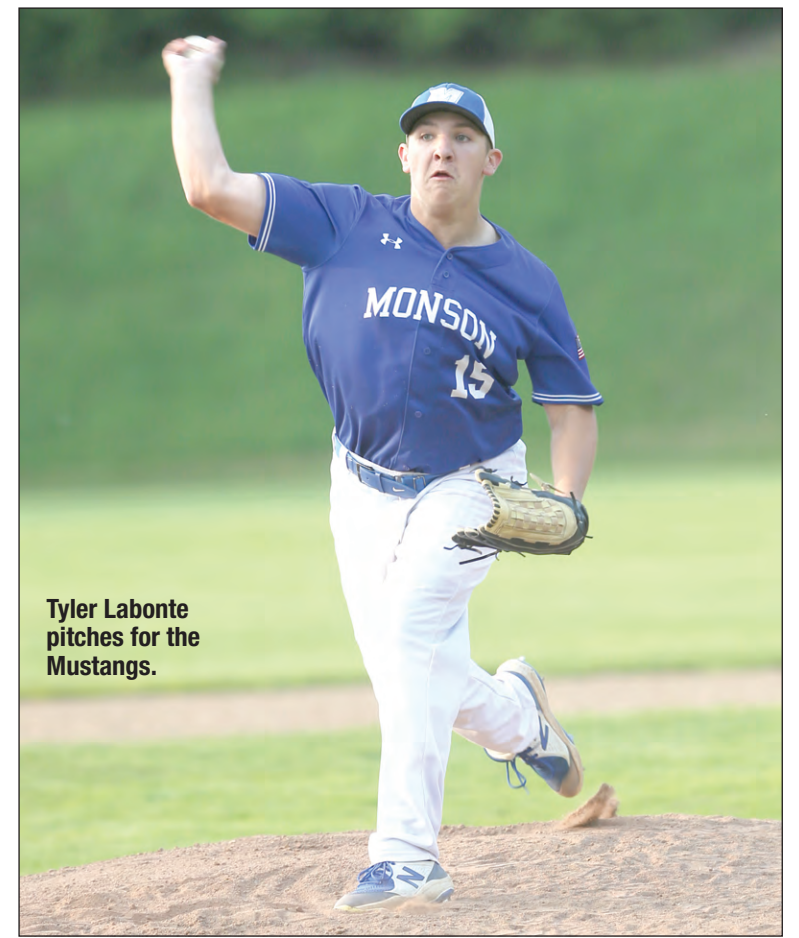
on the legion team.

One of the Ware players who'll be playing for the legion team is junior catcher Dylan Sutkaitis.

"I already know Dylan and I

PANTHERS | page 11

BASEBALL



Tyler Labonte pitches for the Mustangs.

Photos by David Henry www.sweetdogphotos.com

Monson falls to host Palmer

PALMER – Last Wednesday, Monson baseball suffered a 7-3 loss against Palmer. Monson managed just five hits and RBI's from Ben Pignone and Austin Meacham. Tyler Labonte went the distance for Monson, allowing seven runs on four hits, walking four and striking out four. Monson fell to 0-13 on the season.



Colin Beaupre fires to second for a play.

SOFTBALL

Hull deals shutout for Mustangs



Natalie Hull fields a grounder to short.



Left-hander Chelsea Hull delivers a pitch.



Ailis Kealy makes an off-balance catch in right.



Carlee Meacham makes a clean pick-up of a ground.

GRANBY – Last Monday afternoon, Chelsea Hull was able to pitch a five-inning shutout as Monson softball defeated host Granby 11-0. Hull struck out 13 and walked four, allowing just two hits. Molly Szado, Ella

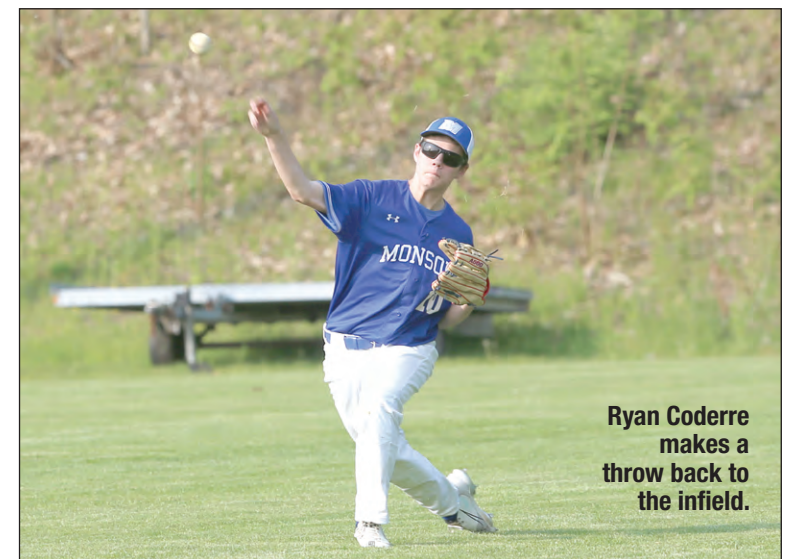


Molly Szado looks to seize the short hop to first.

Corthell, and Veronica Ouimet had three hits each. Monson entered the final week of the season 14-2.



Ben Pignone runs toward second base.



Ryan Coderre makes a throw back to the infield.



Austin Meacham fields a difficult grounder.

Pioneers likely to make tournament



Trevor Millet fields a throw to third.



Brayden Mega tries to avoid a tag.

PALMER – With an 11-3 record entering the week, Pathfinder baseball is looking making tournament in Division 5 this season. The Pioneers are currently ranked No. 23 and have a few games this week to close out the regular season. The Pioneers could also qualify for the Western Mass. tournament as well, which gets underway next week.



Tage Valliere throws to first for an out.



Edward Szosyek makes the catch in left.



Jesse Cygan pitches for the Pioneers.

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Athlete of the Week

Chelsea Hull
Monson

Hull got the start against Granby and had 13 strikeouts and got a shutout win 11-0 last Monday afternoon.

To nominate someone for Athlete of the Week, contact Managing Sports Editor Gregory A. Scibelli at 413-283-8393 ext. 258 or send an e-mail to gscibelli@turley.com.

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Agawam's Hope Santaniello controls the ball.



Jenna Kalwa sends a pass forward.



Alexis Legowski, of South Hadley, goes after the bouncing ball.



Laci Lewis breaks away from a defender.



Photos by David Henry www.sweetdogphotos.com
Avery Klingensmith of Belchertown gets set to pass.

Mutiny offense shines in opener

By Tim Peterson
Sports Correspondent

LUDLOW—The United Women's Soccer National semifinal and final matches were held at historic Lusitano Stadium in Ludlow last July. This year's U.W.S. championship weekend is scheduled to take place 3,000 miles west in Los Angeles, California.

The New England Mutiny players didn't get to compete for the championship trophy on their home turf last summer. They're hoping to make the six-hour plane ride to the west coast in July.

The Mutiny didn't have very much trouble dispatching Worcester Fuel FC, 7-1, in the season opening match before a large crowd at Lusitano Stadium, last Saturday night.

"All of the players worked very hard, and we got the result that we wanted," said Hope Santaniello, who graduated from Agawam High School in 2021. "Our hope for the future is to win the championship title this year. We really want to bring home the trophy for Joe (Ferrara)."

Ferrara, who's the Mutiny General Manager, has put together a roster full of talented soccer players. Santaniello is one of 13 players from Western Massachusetts.

Other players from the region include Julia Robak (Chicopee), Brianna Romaniak (Belchertown), Ela Kopec (Ludlow), Alexis Legowski (South Had-

ley), Avery Klingensmith (Belchertown), Brooke Samborski (Chicopee), Caleigh Foley (Ludlow), and Sophia Syocurka (Ludlow).

Foley and Syocurka will be juniors on the Ludlow girls varsity soccer team in the fall. The duo normally play for the academy team, but they were called up to the U.W.S. team for the season opener.

Laura Gouvin of Monson is also listed on the Mutiny roster. She did not play against Worcester.

Before the start of the regular season, Ferrara named Mauricio "Toto" Coimbra as the Mutiny head coach.

"Everyone is a little bit nervous before the first game of regular season, but we got off to a great start tonight," said Coimbra, who's a former member of the Western Mass. Pioneers. "I've coached at the youth level, but it's very special to win my first game at this level. I think it's going to be a very exciting season."

Coimbra took over the coaching duties from Brian Linnehan, who was hired as an assistant women's soccer coach at Bryant University.

Coimbra is aided by assistant coaches Jill Kochanek, Ciro Viviano, and Federico Molinari, who's also the head coach of the Western Mass. Pioneers.

Santaniello, who's a forward, scored a pair of goals during the first half, which gave her team a 2-0 halftime lead.

During the 24th minute, Santaniello lined a shot over the head of Worcester Fuel goalie Lilliana Mantoni into the

back of the net.

About 15 minutes later, Cat Berry sent a forward pass into the box and Santaniello finished off the play by shooting the ball into the left corner.

"I'm very happy for Hope," Coimbra said. "I think she's a great soccer player, and she has a very bright future. She shoots the ball mainly with her right foot, but she scored one of her goals in tonight's match with her left foot."

After playing soccer for two seasons at the University of Rhode Island, Santaniello has decided to enter the NCAA transfer portal. The portal allows Division 1 athletes the opportunity to transfer to another school without having to sit out a year.

"I decided to leave U.R.I. for personal reasons," Santaniello said. "I just want to keep growing as a soccer player. In order for me to do that, I felt like the best thing was transfer to another school. I just want to find the right school, which will help me get to the next level."

Berry, who's from Hingham, will be a senior on the University of South Carolina women's soccer team in September. She'll be heading back to Columbia, South Carolina in the middle of June to train with her college soccer team.

"Cat is a great soccer player and she's going to have a successful career in the future," Coimbra said. "We're very lucky to have her on our team. We enjoyed watching her play in tonight's match."

Ferrara is hoping that Berry will be able to return to Ludlow if the Mutiny do make the playoffs.

"The atmosphere at the stadium is always great," Berry said. "I just love playing soccer with this group of girls. It was a great way to start our season."

Berry, who's the fifth all-time leading goal scorer at the University of South Carolina with 24 career goals, took over the spotlight at the second half. She finished last Saturday's match with a total of four goals. A couple of her goals came on amazing shots that not very many goalies would be able to stop.

"We definitely could've scored a few more goals in the first half," Berry added. "We just wanted to come out at the start of the second half and put the game away. I took advantage of my opportunities. Hearing the roar of the crowd here at Lusitano is very special."

Berry, who has two more years of eligibility remaining at South Carolina, will most likely be drafted by a N.W.S.L. team after she graduates.

"Playing at that level is something that I've dreamed about my whole life," Berry said. "It would be awesome to play for a professional soccer team in the future."

Chandler Pedolzyk also scored a second half goal for the Mutiny. Jenna Kalwa, who's the women's soccer coach at the University of Saint Joseph in West Hartford, Connecticut, was credited with the assist.

Down at the other end of the field, Kopec, who was the Mutiny starting goalie, only had to make three saves. She was replaced in goal by Robak with ten minutes remaining in regulation.

The members of the Mutiny defensive unit are Sofia Weber, Laci Lewis, Megan Cunningham, and Kinsman.

"This is just an awesome environment to play a soccer match," said Cunningham, who's the Mutiny captain. "We also have a lot of returning players this year, which is a great thing."

The Mutiny will be playing a couple of road matches before returning home to face the Albany Rush on June 10. Their other two home matches during the regular season will be against Sporting CT (June 24) and CT Rush (July 8).

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Celebrates New Fleet of F-35A Aircraft

WESTFIELD – Con. Richard E. Neal joined Maj. Gen. Gary W. Keefe, adjutant general for the Massachusetts National Guard, Colonel David L. Halasi-Kun, base commander for the 104th Fighter Wing, and State Senator John Velis to celebrate the recent announcement that Barnes Air National Guard Base will be receiving a new fleet of F-35A Lightning II aircraft beginning in 2026.

“Today is a good day not just for Barnes Air National Guard Base, but for the entire western Massachusetts community and the Commonwealth for that matter. The announcement on April 18 that the 104th Fighter Wing will be receiving a new fleet of F-35A aircraft comes after years of advocacy by the Massachusetts Congressional Delegation, state leadership, and the Adjutant General for the Massachusetts National Guard Gary Keefe. Most importantly, this announcement is a testament to the dedicated service of the brave airmen and women of Barnes, whose integrity has upheld the superb reputation at Barnes, an integral factor in this decision-making process,” said Neal.

This announcement comes after a rigorous selection process by the U.S. Air Force that reviewed

F-15C units throughout the U.S. and considered a multitude of factors, including community support, environmental factors, and cost. The review process also included an assessment of the location’s ability to facilitate the mission and infrastructure capacity. The assignment of a new fleet of F-35A aircraft at Barnes ANG guarantees the long-term viability of the base, ensuring the 104th Fighter Wing can continue its vital mission for years to come.

“This is just a good fit,” said Keefe, adjutant general of the Massachusetts National Guard. “The 104th has years of experience with the fighter mission at home and abroad, the community is used to fighter operations and provides tremendous support, and the base is perfectly located for defense of the homeland.”

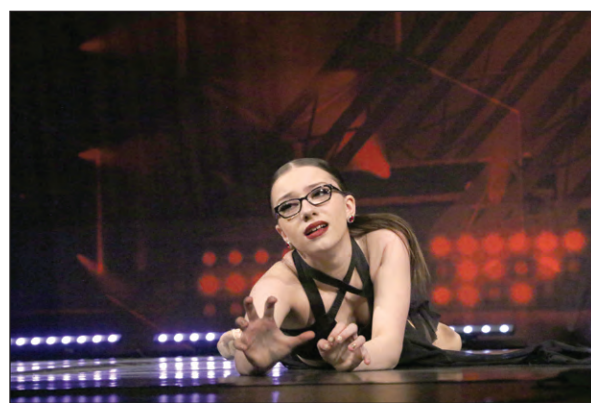
“This decision validates the Wing’s exceptional performance,” said Air Force Col. David L. “Moon” Halasi-Kun, Commander of the 104th Fighter Wing. “We’ve provided air defense for 40 million Americans in New England and New York, a population that produces roughly 30% of the nation’s Gross Domestic Product, through the 24/7/365 no-fail Aerospace Control Alert mission, and

our stellar performance was a big factor.”

“The significance of the F-35A fighter jets coming to the 104th Fighter Wing simply cannot be overstated. This decision from the Pentagon not only solidifies the future of Barnes in our national defense strategy, but it will also bring transformative new economic investments to Westfield and our entire region,” said Velis. “From Congressman Neal and our federal delegation’s zealous advocacy at the Pentagon, to our work at the state level with the SPEED Act to help Massachusetts meet Department of Defense criteria, so many individuals played a role in making this happen. Most of all though, this announcement is a testament to the incredible men and women serving in the 104th Fighter Wing and throughout our commonwealth.”

The basing decision becomes final after favorable completion of an ongoing Environmental Impact Statement on the proposal, upon which the Secretary of the Air Force will sign a Record of Decision. The signing of an ROD is expected by the summer of 2024, putting in motion the stationing of 18 new F-35A Lightning II aircraft at Barnes ANG.

Young Dancer receives Awards for Solo Numbers



Jillieann Gula performed award-winning solos.

THREE RIVERS – Jillieann Gula, age 13, excelled in another dance competition season.

Gula performed two solo numbers this competition season; one piece titled “Body Language,” which was a jazz routine and the other an open routine that was titled, “Medicine.”

Gula moved into a new age category this season, making her one of the youngest in her division. She went into this season just as ferociously as every other season, but knowing the odds were against her dancing against older, more seasoned dancers did not intimidate her one bit.

With Gula’s solo, “Medicine,” she won two titles: Miss Teen Step Up 2 Dance and Miss Teen Elite, and she won two Special Judges’ Choice Awards—both for Emotional Execution. These awards are voted on unanimously.

She won an “Emerging Star Award” that gives her the opportunity to work with Master Choreographers, an award that is only given to a few select dancers throughout the season. She also won a “Powerful Intensity Judges’ Award.”

For Gula’s jazz solo, “Body Language,” she won the honors of a “High Score Overall,” having the highest scoring number in her age division and category. Gula won the title of “Miss Teen That’s Entertainment,” as well as a special judges’ award that was titled “The



Submitted photo

Jillieann Gula received awards for her dance recital this week.

Expressive Eyes Award”.

Gula also won multiple National Invites and was selected to be on special dance teams while attending Nationals.

Multiple judges throughout the competition season were impressed with Gula’s ability to commit to her pieces while dancing with emotion and telling a story.

This summer Gula will be attending a National event with her studio in Hyannis. She will also be taking Master classes and starting her new routines for next season, and is already excited for next season.

This year at Colby Academy of Dance’s dance recital, her studio in, Gula will be receiving her 11-year award.

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